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Commission on Sustainable Development
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20 April-1 May 1998
Agenda item 5
Economic sector/major group: industry

Chairman's summary of the industry segment of the sixth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development

(21 and 22 April 1998)

1. The new programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development for the period 1998-2002, recommended by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session and approved by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1997/63, provides for policy discussion, exchanges of experiences and elaboration of common approaches within specific economic sectors having strong linkages to environmental and natural resource issues. The Bureau of the fifth session of the Commission, at its meeting held on 2 and 3 October 1997, suggested that the sixth session of the Commission include a separate "industry segment" to provide an interactive dialogue on industry and sustainable development between the representatives of industry (both the business community and trade unions), non-governmental organizations, Governments and international organizations.

2. Four themes were identified for discussion during the industry segment: responsible entrepreneurship; corporate management tools; technology cooperation and assessment; and industry and freshwater.

3. An interactive dialogue among the representatives of Governments, industry, trade unions, non-governmental organizations and other major groups – a constructive innovation in the work of the Commission in response to the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly – contributed to the Commission's intergovernmental process. It was also a learning experience, the results of which would need to be taken fully into account by the Commission in preparing for similar events during future sessions. At such future events, it would be important to secure a better balance with respect to the participation of representatives from developed and developing countries in the delegations of major groups.

4. The summary set out below was prepared by the Chairman of the Commission. While the format of the summary does not allow all the views expressed to be reflected in detail, an attempt is made to highlight some general conclusions which met with broad agreement among the participants, those which require more dialogue and better understanding, and specific initiatives suggested by participants.

5. It is expected that the dialogue launched during the industry segment will stimulate further action and collaboration, both within and beyond the aegis of the Commission, to foster stronger partnerships among Governments, as well as between Governments and all other partners concerned, aimed at achieving sustainable development worldwide.

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I. Responsible entrepreneurship

6. Participants recognized the important role of responsible entrepreneurship and voluntary initiatives in support of sustainable development, but noted that, although much progress had been achieved by industry, more needed to be done to build upon those achievements. In this regard, it was important to promote the practice of responsible entrepreneurship within more sectors, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It was suggested that more work was necessary to clearly define terms and concepts related to voluntary initiatives and to develop appropriate mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness and successful characteristics of those initiatives.

7. Representatives of trade unions stressed that responsible entrepreneurship should incorporate democratic principles of participation to promote the participation of workers, trade unions and civil society in decision-making and implementation. Industry was also urged to recognize the need for universal compliance by industry with core labour standards, as contained in International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions, and to expand productive employment, reduce unemployment, enhance social protection and reduce the vulnerability of the poorest groups.

8. Representatives of industry were of the opinion that they demonstrated a strong commitment to improving environmental performance through voluntary initiatives such as the chemical industry's Responsible Care programme in many countries, as well as initiatives built on the concept of continuous improvement. Representatives of industry suggested that voluntary initiatives should be sector, industry and country specific because no "one size fits all".

9. Participants generally agreed that there should be an integrated approach to promoting responsible entrepreneurship and voluntary initiatives and, in addition to the regulatory framework and incentives provided by Governments to encourage voluntary compliance, there should also be active participation by all stakeholders in the process. It was also important to develop new partnerships between industry, government and other stakeholders.

10. Many participants stressed that, with the spreading practice of responsible entrepreneurship and increasing use of voluntary initiatives, it was important to continue to improve the quality of the reporting of such practices. Concerns were expressed that one of the weaknesses of current corporate reporting was the absence of information that would permit an assessment of the contribution of voluntary initiatives towards achieving sustainability.

11. Representatives of trade unions, supported by non-governmental organizations, presented the view that, in general, voluntary initiatives should have the following features: transparency, accountability and workplace mechanisms to ensure the participation of workers and trade unions; allow monitoring and assessment of corporate practice, beginning with the workplace; ensure access to information for workers, community members and Governments to evaluate the effect of corporate decisions and practices; set quantifiable objectives and comply with environmental law; reflect indicators of sustainable development promoted by ILO; and incorporate the principles of the "right to know", "whistle-blower protection" and the "right to refuse" work where workplace activities were shown to be harmful to the environment.

12. With regard to government policies, many participants emphasized that Governments had an important role to play in promoting responsible entrepreneurship because voluntary initiatives by industry complemented rather than replaced government intervention. In order to promote responsible entrepreneurship, Governments should provide the necessary regulatory framework and use appropriate market mechanisms, including incentives, to encourage actions and behaviour on the part of industry that supported the goal of sustainable development. The use of incentives, for example, could encourage industry to achieve improvements beyond minimum standards. As employment was a cornerstone of sustainable development, education and training policies should be designed to incorporate key elements of sustainable development.

13. A number of speakers stressed that Governments had a crucial role to play in promoting the integration of the social and environmental objectives of sustainable development within industry. Particular attention should be given to developing support programmes to promote responsible entrepreneurship among SMEs. Particular attention should be given to developing appropriate partnerships with non-governmental organizations, trade unions and SMEs by providing financial support, technical training and other capacity-building resources to foster responsible entrepreneurship.

14. Participants recommended that Governments develop an effective dialogue with industry and stakeholders to promote the development of voluntary initiatives and programmes to reach well-defined and time-bound objectives. In partnership with business and industry and international organizations, Governments should promote

the development of performance indicators to facilitate the quantification and comparison of the environmental and social performance of companies.

15. In addressing the role of industry, several speakers noted the progress achieved in promoting responsible entrepreneurship since the Rio Summit but stressed that more needed to be done to extend and improve the contribution of industry in that area. They considered it important that industry continue to promote best practices. Representatives of industry noted that it was in their own interests to promote sustainable development for the long-term viability of industry.

16. Participants acknowledged that some progress had been made in the reporting on voluntary initiatives and agreements by industry. However, it was noted that in order to improve the quality and scope of reporting, more work was needed to quantify the environmental and social progress achieved by industry. In particular, reporting on social progress was in its infancy.

17. In particular, representatives of non-governmental organizations urged industry to improve its reporting on voluntary initiatives by addressing adequately the issues of transparency, independent verification, standardization and stakeholder involvement. Representatives of trade unions added that the assessment of progress made in a sector or country needed to be facilitated through the development of a set of relevant indicators and metrics.

18. Turning to the role of the industry associations, participants urged those associations to continue and expand proactive servicing of the sustainable development needs of their members and emphasized that they could play key roles, for example, in developing substantive voluntary codes of conduct and building the commitment of the membership to those codes.

19. In view of the fact that foreign direct investment (FDI) was an important vehicle for promoting responsible entrepreneurship, industry was invited to direct more FDI to the least developed countries. Such FDI could complement official development assistance (ODA) and help to spread better business practices into developing countries. Representatives of industry suggested that donors consider an increased share of ODA for capacity-building aimed at creating conditions favourable to the flow of FDI, particularly in least developed countries.

20. The participants highlighted the role of the international community in promoting responsible entrepreneurship, and representatives of non-governmental organizations and trade unions recommended that the sustainable development dimension should be incorporated into international agreements, including agreements in the World Trade Organization and the Multilateral Agreement on Investment currently being negotiated by countries members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

21. In this context, participants emphasized that a global approach was necessary to ensure that environmental and social goals were clearly identified and pursued. The international community should continue to develop, assess and disseminate best practices.

22. Representatives of non-governmental organizations, with support from trade unions, proposed a review by all major groups of voluntary initiatives undertaken by industry. The major groups planned to meet to consider the elements and goals of such a review. Representatives of industry proposed organizing such a meeting in the third quarter of 1998.

II. Corporate management tools for sustainable development

23. The merits of various corporate management tools for sustainable development were discussed, and it was generally agreed that the use of corporate management tools had benefits for industry and other stakeholders. However, it was stressed that no one tool could solve all problems and that each tool had specific strengths and limitations. What was necessary were "tool boxes", on the understanding that companies would need the flexibility to choose the methods best suited to their particular organizational characteristics.

24. There was a large measure of agreement that education, training, technical assistance and information collection and dissemination were crucial for corporate management tools to be successfully implemented. There was also widespread agreement that the special situation and role of small and medium-size enterprises, especially in developing countries, warranted particular attention. With regard to the implementation of voluntary environmental management systems, it was noted that the involvement of all stakeholders would ensure the best results. Some participants felt that environmental management systems should incorporate independent third-party verification, monitoring of implementation and public reporting of results. On this issue, representatives of trade unions felt that workplaces should be seen as a major focus of action to implement sustainable development goals, and urged that training be utilized by all sectors to promote the knowledge

and attitudinal changes necessary for cleaner production, waste reduction, pollution control and energy conservation.

25. Participants stressed that good environmental management should be seen as a long-term process of continual learning and improvement. It entailed an internal transformation that increased awareness, involved employees and changed organizational behaviour. Environmental protection, health and safety systems were fundamental, providing the structure that supported the integration of sustainable development into the day-to-day operation of business, and should be encouraged in companies of all sizes and sectors. Essential elements of an environmental management system included environmental reporting, auditing, objectives, accounting and indicators. Other tools included the precautionary principle, cleaner production, eco-efficiency, life-cycle assessment, durability and design for the environment.

26. With regard to government policies, participants noted that Governments had an important role to play in promoting the use of corporate management tools that improved the performance of industry in meeting the objectives of sustainable development. To this end, Governments should provide regulatory frameworks and incentives to encourage industry to more widely employ corporate management tools such as environmental management systems in order to improve their environmental performance.

27. The view was expressed that Governments should promote fair and rigorous certification and accreditation in order to safeguard the credibility of national, regional and international standards of management systems.

28. Regarding the role of industry in promoting corporate management tools, participants noted that the implementation of tools such as environmental management systems was increasing. Participants urged industry to continue to improve its environmental performance and to increase its collection and dissemination of data in order to demonstrate that progress, and to keep stakeholders informed of its policies and practices. Business and industry should continue to explore possibilities for verifying adherence to voluntary initiatives such as ISO-14001 and the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS).

29. Industry should also develop strategies for bringing SMEs into the mainstream of good environmental management and for using investment, trade and markets to disseminate good practices, technologies and expertise to developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Multinational companies could play an important role by increasing their cooperation with SMEs. Partnerships with government and other stakeholders would be crucial to supporting that effort.

30. Furthermore, companies should work with suppliers to spread best practices and support efforts to implement ILO core labour standards and international environmental standards.

31. Representatives of trade unions urged industry to ensure that corporate management tools included the following functions: provide for democratic decision-making in the workplace and participatory mechanisms to involve workers and their trade unions; build on progress made within an industrial relations context which included collective bargaining and other forms of workplace-based agreements between employers and trade unions; promote joint workplace target-setting by employers and trade unions, and encourage joint monitoring programmes, evaluation processes and implementation measures; and promote training and education of workers to enable them to be fully involved in environmental management systems.

III. Technology cooperation and assessment

32. Representatives of industry provided a working definition of technology cooperation and suggested that successful technology cooperation required an efficient market system that provided the financial incentives necessary for technological innovation and investment in modern technology. Technology cooperation and assessment (TCA) was an important mechanism for progressing towards sustainable development. They suggested that market mechanisms provide the primary vehicle for TCA. Moreover, exchange of technologies should be a two-way street. Representatives of industry were of the view that TCA and foreign direct investment, together with increased international trade, had contributed to rapid economic growth and poverty alleviation in several developing countries. They stated that an enabling political and policy framework was required, for example, with regard to political and economic stability, intellectual property rights and an adequate legal framework, and fighting corruption. However, they maintained that it was equally important to ensure that overly restrictive legislation did not encourage the transfer of bad and inappropriate technologies, and to establish joint initiatives to facilitate investment. It was also required that knowledge, skills and equipment be transferred between actors at the local, national and international levels.

33. There appeared to be widespread agreement that technology cooperation should involve the highest degree of safety and environmental protection that was reasonably achievable. Transfer of efficient technologies should be accompanied by high environmental, health and safety standards.

34. Furthermore, some participants emphasized that technologies should be properly assessed, introduced and reviewed in order to avoid causing environmentally and socially adverse impacts in recipient countries. This required advanced education and training. Access to information was crucial and could be supported by a clearing-house mechanism. Representatives of non-governmental organizations called for talent and technology banks to be established at the regional level with the involvement of all stakeholders. As well as acting as clearing houses, such information banks could make available unbiased information on endogenous environmentally sound technologies and the technologies of indigenous people. They could also promote joint venture development and local ownership of technologies, provide opportunities for scientists to work in their own countries and serve as an office to register and protect intellectual property rights.

35. There was widespread agreement on the need to explore the potential of publicly owned and publicly funded environmentally sound technologies since a proportion of those technologies were held or owned by Governments or public institutions, or resulted from publicly funded research activities.

36. With regard to the role of government, there was broad consensus that Governments should develop and implement policies to create a stable macroeconomic environment and an enabling legal and financial framework to facilitate technology cooperation and attract the foreign direct investment needed for the transfer and dissemination of environmentally sound technologies.

37. There was broad consensus that in order to improve the capacity of local industry to absorb and adapt new technologies, Governments should strengthen educational systems and, in cooperation with other major groups, expand opportunities for training in order to promote the integration of imported technology with locally available technology.

38. Many participants were of the opinion that Governments of developing countries could improve their bargaining capabilities in technology transfer agreements through increased technology assessment capacity. Representatives of non-governmental organizations advanced the view that developing countries, in order to maximize social, economic and environmental benefits, should focus their limited scientific and technical resources on improving their capacity to evaluate and bargain for foreign technology and expertise that would serve national priorities.

39. Many participants were of the opinion that Governments, in their efforts to safeguard the rights of indigenous people, should explore ways and means to compensate indigenous communities for knowledge used in patents on genetic resources.

40. They also felt that industry should further develop and strengthen safety guidelines to prevent adverse effects of technology, including health effects and industrial accidents.

41. Many participants considered that official development assistance should provide more resources for capacity-building in order to improve the absorption of imported technologies in developing countries.

42. International programmes to produce independent, credible verification of environmental technologies could assist users and regulators of technology to make informed decisions, and help suppliers of technology to reach global markets more quickly. The public would benefit through improved environmental quality. Many noted that further work was necessary to identify the types of verification programmes that could be effective.

43. Representatives of trade unions emphasized that technology transfer must serve to protect the environment, promote employment as a cornerstone of sustainable development, and be undertaken with the full range of risk assessment and control procedures already developed in the area of occupational health and safety. Transition programmes should be instituted for workers displaced because of technological change, and workers should be provided with training and education, including international worker exchange programmes, organized with the involvement of trade unions as a basis for effective technology transfer. Workers and trade unions should be involved in decisions affecting technology changes at the workplace.

44. Representatives of non-governmental organizations called for banks and international financial institutions to provide access to long-term financing for business development by non-governmental organizations utilizing environmentally sound technologies in independent or joint venture projects.

IV. Industry and freshwater

45. Several speakers noted that the twenty-first century would witness increasing competition for finite freshwater resources, and that all sectors needed to cooperate if society was to avert or minimize the adverse effects associated with emerging freshwater shortages. Comprehensive freshwater management strategies must involve all suppliers and users. Non-governmental organizations stressed that good water management could not be undertaken by a central Government and had to be designed according to local conditions, with problem-solving based on the involvement of all stakeholders, especially women and indigenous peoples, preferably at a subnational or local level. It was noted that over 1 billion people did not have access to safe drinking water, over 2 billion did not have access to adequate sanitation and 3 to 5 billion deaths per year resulted from water-related diseases.

46. Participants emphasized that the integrated watershed management approach had become absolutely necessary in water resource protection. It was imperative to consider the impact of industrial activities on the watershed where a particular industrial site was located, as well as on populations and areas downstream. The impact of the industrial facilities on the ecosystem should be addressed, and the best practices should be implemented in a collaborative approach. In that regard, trade unions felt that the issue of water must be approached in an integrated way, especially with regard to target-setting in the workplace.

47. Participants recognized that education and information were critical for local water resource protection and improving water quality. The involvement of women and indigenous people in improving water quality was especially critical.

48. As to the role of Governments, participants emphasized that special attention needed to be paid to the issue of full pricing of water. Considering that water was an economic, environmental and social good, some participants felt that its pricing should cover costs and risks associated with finding, processing, conserving and delivering water to end-users, as well as meeting the demands of social equity.

49. Participants also noted that agriculture was the largest water consumer and was a crucial sector for the evolution of government water policy, especially in countries experiencing water scarcity.

50. There was broad agreement that Governments should remain ultimately responsible for water protection, supply and delivery. They should play the major role in the treatment and delivery of water, protection of water from abuse, pollution prevention and the promotion of employment through improved management. Governments should establish or maintain standards to ensure the safety of water consumption and prevent health hazards associated with water-related diseases, in close collaboration with industry and other stakeholders.

51. Industry representatives suggested that Governments must accept that there were certain risks which only they could absorb. The private sector did not have the authority or capacity to deal with such problems as acquisition of land and rights of way for the installation of pipelines and plants at an economic cost; efficient performance by government-owned distribution companies with contracts to purchase water from private-sector water companies; and the financial impact of large changes in exchange rates.

52. There was general agreement that a more comprehensive management of water resources, including pollution control policies, was necessary. Appropriate regulations or economic incentives and institutional structures should be developed for internalizing the externalities that arose when one user affected the quantity and quality of water available to another group. The effects of damage caused by industries through pollution of surface water and groundwater needed to be taken into account in determining their water tariffs.

53. Participants noted that there was a growing consensus for greater private-sector involvement, taking into account the political, legal, cultural, institutional, financial and technical characteristics of water and sewage systems.

54. Many participants noted that industry could play an active role in a number of areas related to the demand for freshwater for human needs, including research and development of efficient new infrastructure for urban water supply and new technology for the reuse of urban wastewater.

55. Non-governmental organizations stressed that guidelines for monitoring biological and chemical toxicity at both water sources and delivery points could be developed by appropriate United Nations bodies.

56. In the area of sustainable provision of water to meet agricultural needs, some participants suggested that industry could help by promoting best practices in environmental management, including fertilizer and pesticide usage. In addition, some suggested that industrial research and development for improving irrigation technology should be strongly supported. In that context, targets for agriculture

use of water should be set and met. Non-governmental organizations representatives proposed that the Commission should initiate an ongoing dialogue of stakeholder groups to develop common criteria for good practices.

57. Many participants stressed that the environment was not just a sectoral user of water but played a fundamental role in maintaining the quality and supply of water resources for use for other purposes. Industry could assist in promoting effective environmental management of water and land resources. The chemical and fertilizer sectors, for example, had an important role to play in protecting water quality and life-supporting ecosystems.

58. Many participants suggested that workers and their trade unions be involved with employers in developing workplace eco-auditing tools to address problems of water management.

59. Some participants felt that industry should also develop standards to protect existing water quality and improve substandard sources. Decisions on siting industrial facilities should take into account the quality of the water resources to be used and the impact of the industrial activity on those resources.

60. Industry representatives suggested further work on defining the nature and pricing of natural resources, such as water, in particular the definition of social goods and how they should be monetarized and integrated in market prices. They suggested that two countries be invited to work together to evaluate how to achieve full cost-pricing and manage water tariffs. Two other countries could study how watershed management could contribute to water protection and enhance carbon sinks for greenhouse gases under the "Clean development" mechanism.

61. With respect to actions by the international community, many participants suggested that the United Nations system play an active role in harmonizing, at the international and national levels, the recommendations being made to countries for integrated water resources management strategies. In addition, they suggested that the United Nations system play a central role in the development and coordination of data and information networks, strengthen regional and global monitoring systems, conduct periodic global assessments and analyses, promote the broadest exchange and dissemination of relevant information, in particular to developing countries, and increase its role in education efforts.

62. They also suggested that international organizations promote technology transfer and research cooperation in collaboration with Governments and industry to foster sustainable agriculture practices that integrated efficient water use and prevented the pollution of surface water and groundwater.

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COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Sixth session
20 April-1 May 1998
Agenda item 10

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS SIXTH SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Martha Inés GALINDO (Colombia)

Chapter __

ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Commission on Sustainable Development held its sixth session at United Nations Headquarters on 22 December 1997 and from 20 April to 1 May 1998. The Commission held __ meetings (1st to ___ meetings).

2. At the 2nd meeting, on 20 April, the Chairman, Mr. Cielito Habito (Philippines), made an introductory statement.

3. Also at the 2nd meeting, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat made an introductory statement.

B. Attendance

4. The session was attended by representatives of __ States members of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations and for the European Community, representatives of organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, and observers for intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations also attended. A list of participants is contained in annex __ to the present report.

C. Election of officers

5. At the 1st and 2nd meetings, on 22 December 1997 and 20 April 1998, the Commission elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: Cielito Habito (Philippines)

Vice-Chairmen: Rogatieu Biaou (Benin)
Marta Inés Galindo (Colombia)
Michael Odevall (Sweden)
Miloslav Hettes (Slovakia)

6. At the 2nd meeting, on 20 April 1998, Marta Inés Galindo (Colombia) was elected to serve also as Rapporteur.

D. Agenda and organization of work

7. At the 8th meeting, on 23 April 1998, the Commission adopted its provisional agenda, as contained in document E/CN.17/1998/1 and Corr.1, and approved its organization of work, as circulated in an informal paper. The agenda was as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Sectoral theme: strategic approaches to freshwater management.
4. Cross-sectoral theme: transfer of technology, capacity-building, education, science and awareness-raising.
5. Economic sector/major group: industry.
6. Review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.
7. High-level meeting.
8. Other matters.
9. Provisional agenda for the seventh session of the Commission.
10. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its sixth session.

8. At the 2nd meeting, on 20 April, the Commission agreed to invite the secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development to attend the session of the Commission as intergovernmental organizations, with the status of observers.

E. Documentation

9. The documents before the Commission at its sixth session are listed in annex __ to the present report.

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COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Sixth session
20 April-1 May 1998
Item 6

REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

Draft text submitted by the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Rogatien Biaou (Benin)

Review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

A. Overall considerations

1. The Commission takes note of the reports of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States[1] and on development of a vulnerability index for small island developing States.[2]

2. The Commission on Sustainable Development recalls the decision of the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session on the modalities for the full and comprehensive review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.[3] In particular, the Commission notes the importance of the two-day special session to be convened immediately preceding the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, in 1999, for an in-depth assessment and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action, as reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 52/202.

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[1] E/CN.17/1998/7 and Add.1-9.

[2] A/53/65-E/1998/5.

[3] Resolution S-19/2, annex, para. 71.

3. The Commission urges small island developing States to continue and enhance their preparations for the seventh session of the Commission and the 1999 special session, and calls upon the international community, United Nations agencies and intergovernmental bodies to provide assistance to small island developing States for practical and concrete actions. Noting the work already begun by the small island developing States and regional organizations and institutions in that regard, the Commission invites the international community, United Nations agencies and intergovernmental bodies to support regional initiatives and to collaborate in partnership with the regional organizations and institutions to speed up preparations for the review.

4. In the light of paragraph 24 of the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,[4] the Commission encourages all small island developing States to put in place national sustainable development strategies that take into account the links between economic, social and environmental indicators and policies on an ongoing basis, and invites bilateral donors and United Nations agencies and organizations, as well as the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, to join in the promotion of coordinated capacity-building programmes to support the development and implementation of national, subregional and regional strategies. The implementation of strategies for sustainable development will be primarily the responsibility of small island developing States, with the essential support of the international community. The Commission urges proper consideration of the need for capacity-building to develop and implement strategies for sustainable development at the proposed donors' conference.

5. The Commission reaffirms the important coordinating role played by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and its efforts to assist small island developing States with the review process, and calls on the Department to remain actively involved in the preparatory process leading up to the special session, including effective coordination with all relevant sectors of the international community in taking any necessary measures to provide support and assistance to small island developing States.

6. The donors' conference on small island developing States to be held in early 1999 is welcomed as a useful forum for assistance in the pursuit of small island States sustainable development objectives, and the Commission encourages all small island States to fully utilize the donors' conference to that end. The Commission recommends that the envisaged donors' conference consider proposed project portfolios that reflect progress to implement the relevant components of the Programme of Action. The international donor community is urged to engage actively with small island developing States during the conference to achieve realistic and positive outcomes and concrete assistance for all small island developing States, including the sharing of updated information on current donor activities in support of the sustainable development of small island developing States. The Secretary-General's preparations for the donors' conference will also need to take account of and work with ongoing national and regional round-table and consultative groups.

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[4] Resolution S-19/2, annex.

7. The Programme of Action recognizes that small island developing States are a special case for both environment and development because they are ecologically fragile and vulnerable, and because they face particular constraints in their efforts to achieve sustainable development. In that regard, the Commission recalls that the international community reaffirmed its commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action at the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly.[3] It was also noted at the special session that the considerable efforts being made at the national and regional levels need to be supplemented by effective financial support from the international community, and by facilitating the transfer of environmentally sound technologies in accordance with paragraph 34.14 (b) of Agenda 21.[5] The Commission notes that the support of the international community is vital. The 1999 overall review of the implementation of the Programme of Action should include an assessment of changes in the financial resource flows to small island developing States, both overall and by sector, including private as well as public resources. That review will help to determine whether the international community is providing effective means, including adequate, predictable, new and additional resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action in accordance with chapter 33 of Agenda 21.[6]

8. The Commission calls upon national Governments, or regional intergovernmental organizations, as appropriate, to help ensure effective coordination of donor and recipient government efforts, which is a basic prerequisite for successful development assistance.

B. Climate change and sea level rise

9. The Commission recalls the well recognized vulnerability of small island developing States to global climate change, and the likelihood that accompanying sea level rise will have severe and negative effects on the environment, biological diversity, economy and infrastructures of small island developing States and on the health and welfare of their peoples. It recognizes that the ability of small island developing States to respond to the threat of climate change is hampered by the lack of institutional, scientific and technical capacity, as well as by the lack of financial resources.

10. The Commission recognizes the need to strengthen the response capability of small island developing States by education, training and public awareness-raising, and through regional and international cooperation. The Commission urges the international community to commit adequate financial and technical resources and assistance to help small island developing States in their ongoing efforts at the national and regional levels to build effective response measures, and to strengthen their institutional and human resource capacity to

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[5] Ibid., para. 72.

[6] See Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 94.I.18 and Corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I, Part Two, sect. III, para. 1.

cope with the effects of climate change and sea level rise. The Commission calls on the international community to commit appropriate and additional support for the regional organizations and institutions to strengthen their effectiveness, in particular in support for ongoing regional assessments of probable environmental changes and impacts, mitigation and adaptation strategies; development and dissemination of guidelines for coastal protection and management as well as in other relevant areas; use and substitution of new and renewable sources of energy; and in the capacity-building programmes of the regional organizations and institutions.

11. The Commission notes that climate change will also have socio-economic consequences for small island developing States, and encourages them, in collaboration with regional organizations and institutions, to undertake integrated assessment studies of the effects of global warming and sea level rise on socio-economic issues, including population concentration and location infrastructure, food security, and effects on human health and culture.

12. The Commission notes that there is a critical need to further scientific and technical studies and research on the climate change phenomenon and its impacts in relation to small island developing States, and calls on the international community to continue to undertake and to assist small island developing States in such studies and research.

13. The Commission welcomes the adoption and the opening for signature of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and urges the international community, and in particular Annex 1 Parties to the Convention, to become Parties to the Kyoto Protocol as soon as possible in order to facilitate its early entry into force.

C. Management of wastes

14. The Commission notes the difficulties and constraints confronting small island developing States in the management of wastes and in their efforts to minimize and prevent pollution. The Commission is concerned that significant work is needed at all levels to strengthen the capacities of small island developing States and to implement the actions, policies and measures identified in the Programme of Action. Since current waste disposal problems and issues present immediate challenges to island communities, the Commission calls on the international community to support the efforts of small island developing States in the development of effective institutional capacity to cope with those issues.

15. The Commission takes note that one of the main obstacles for small island developing States is the lack of an integrated or comprehensive approach to waste management strategies, and encourages small island developing States Governments to focus appropriate priority on building integrated and environmentally sound waste management strategies and policies that involve all sectors and industries.

16. The Commission recognizes the ongoing work that is being undertaken by the United Nations system and by regional organizations and institutions in this

process, and supports the continuation of such work in an integrated manner across small island developing States regions. Noting the important role played by the regional bodies in developing and coordinating regional waste management programmes, which often provide the framework for national action, the Commission encourages regional cooperation within respective small island developing States regions for the establishment of regional coordinating mechanisms for waste management in those regions where none currently exist, and calls on the international community and the United Nations system to continue to provide appropriate support for those efforts.

17. Noting that waste and pollution from ships, in particular the potential for major oil spills, represent an important concern for small island developing States in view of their consequences for the marine and coastal environment and biological diversity, the Commission proposes that the international community, in collaboration with regional organizations and institutions, provide effective support for international and regional initiatives to protect small island developing States regions from ship-borne wastes and pollution, including the development of facilities for receiving ship-borne waste in ports. The Commission calls upon all countries to adhere to and enforce existing International Maritime Organization regulations.

18. The Commission urges small island developing States to give early consideration to becoming Parties to important international agreements that cover waste management and disposal, such as the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and Their Disposal, as well as relevant regional agreements, such as the Waigani Convention to Ban the Importation of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes in the South Pacific Region.

19. The Commission calls on the international community, in particular the United Nations system and the donor community, to continue to support small island developing States efforts in this area, in particular in the development of sound waste management infrastructure, including through financial resources and transfer of environmentally sound technologies; building adequate legislative frameworks; and the strengthening of institutional capacity.

D. Freshwater resources

20. The Commission notes that for small island developing States, the conservation and sustainable management of freshwater resources is fundamentally dependent on sound knowledge and understanding of the water resources potential, and that there is a vital link to the management of coastal and marine resources and waste.

21. The lack of an adequate knowledge base and ongoing monitoring programmes, often compounded by the small size, remoteness, physical structure and rapid urbanization of small island developing States, exacerbates difficulties in management and adequate supply of freshwater resources, particularly in the smaller islands and coral atoll communities. The Commission encourages small island developing States, with the vital support of the international community, to establish and strengthen, as appropriate, geographic information system

(GIS)-based data collection, storage, analysis and retrieval systems, including monitoring programmes, and appropriate institutional frameworks, including legislation and national coordinating mechanisms for the management of freshwater and groundwater resources, and to give high priority to the immediate development and implementation of appropriate national water action plans. The Commission notes the importance of the World Meteorological Organization's World Hydrological Cycle Observing System, in particular the Caribbean Hydrological Cycle Observing System.

22. The Commission encourages small island developing States to develop an effective integrated approach to freshwater management, involving the full collaboration of all interested stakeholders, in particular women, to ensure the sustainable utilization of water resources, through appropriate demand management policies, including pricing. This should include cross-sectoral planning and cooperation between relevant sectors and industries, such as land and waste management, tourism, and industrial and other sectors, as well as the active participation of the private sector and local communities. The Commission encourages small island developing States Governments to prioritize public awareness programmes in efforts to promote environmentally sustainable use of freshwater and coastal waters.

23. The Commission notes the importance of regional and interregional cooperation on freshwater issues, and recommends greater cooperation and exchange of technical information, monitoring and modelling methodologies, and expertise within and among small island developing States regions in further efforts to promote sound water management programmes for the benefit of small island developing States. The international community is urged to support the efforts of small island developing States, including the implementation of GIS-based information and data systems and training programmes for key personnel.

24. Noting the ongoing work of United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, in their assistance programmes to small island developing States within the context of implementation of the Programme of Action, the Commission encourages the continuation of those efforts in conjunction with the regional organizations and institutions. The Commission calls on the international community to continue to provide support for regional and national efforts to promote sound water resources assessment and monitoring procedures, demand management and policy frameworks, including the transfer and development of appropriate and cleaner production technologies for small island developing States.

E. Land resources

25. Small island developing States face special constraints in the management of land resources, particularly of agricultural, forestry and mineral resources. The Commission notes the efforts made so far at all levels in addressing the key issues identified in the Programme of Action, and notes in particular the significant gaps which remain in many areas, including in the knowledge base and understanding of the various land-based resources potential. Recognizing the

environmental and cost impacts of land use on other sectors, such as water and forest resources, the Commission encourages small island developing States to implement a comprehensive and integrated approach to land-use management, involving all sectors, especially those at the community level and relevant stakeholders, in the process.

26. The Commission encourages small island developing States to prioritize institutional strengthening and capacity-building measures at the national and regional levels, including the development of national and regional legislative frameworks and sustainable long-term land management plans. It is essential that those be developed from the basis of sound knowledge and proper understanding of resources. In that respect, the Commission calls on the international community to continue to support the efforts of small island developing States, including through the provision of technical assistance and transfer of appropriate technologies for sustainable agriculture, forestry and mineral development practices and environmental impact assessments. Small island developing States are encouraged to create appropriate environment and resource databases, including GIS, which would be an invaluable basis for all aspects of land-use planning and management, including soil erosion control, to minimize environmental degradation, and to continue their efforts for public awareness programmes at all levels of society on the benefits of a sustainable approach to land-use practices. The international community is urged to support the efforts of small island developing States, including the implementation of GIS-based information and data systems and training programmes for key personnel.

27. The Commission notes the important role played by United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental organizations in promoting an improved approach to land-use management in small island developing States. The Commission calls on the international community to help to strengthen the ability of existing regional institutions to assist small island developing States in improving their land-use management. Where effective regional institutions do not exist, consideration should be given to establishing such institutions with the assistance of the international community.

F. Biodiversity resources

28. The Commission takes note of the uniqueness and extreme fragility of biological diversity, both terrestrial and marine, in small island developing States, and in the light of their capacity constraints, of the disproportionate responsibility facing small island developing States in the conservation of those biological resources. It acknowledges the necessity for further action at all levels to realize the full implementation of the relevant parts of the Programme of Action and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

29. Noting that a lack of appropriately qualified and trained personnel is a significant obstacle to the vital management of those natural resources, the Commission encourages small island developing States to set a high priority on national technological and human capacity-building within strong institutional frameworks to address that imbalance. Small island developing States are encouraged to put in place effective conservation measures for the protection of

biological diversity, with particular emphasis on management and effective monitoring and control of existing activities that may have serious environmental consequences, such as deforestation, unsustainable agricultural practices and overfishing.

30. The Commission notes the importance of regional cooperation in the conservation of biological diversity, and encourages small island developing States to develop strong national, regional and interregional networks for cooperation at all levels of biodiversity conservation, including the exchange of data and expertise. Noting ongoing regional programmes in some small island developing States for the designation of conservation areas, the Commission urges those small island developing States that have not done so to designate and develop terrestrial and marine protected areas at an early stage for the conservation of biological diversity with the goal of long-term ecological sustainability.

31. The Commission notes ongoing work and programmes currently being implemented by small island developing States and by the international and regional organizations, and urges the international community to continue to provide support to small island developing States for national and regional capacity-building in their efforts for the conservation and sustainable use of those important natural resources. In particular, the Commission recommends that international support include technical assistance in the development of legislative and regulatory frameworks, technology transfer and appropriate training programmes. International support should also include technical assistance in the development of measures to establish intellectual property rights within the context of protection of biodiversity resources, and the Commission notes the development of programmes to assist developing countries in this area.

32. Given the important role of small island developing States as custodians of a significant proportion of the world's biological diversity, the Commission stresses the importance of enabling small island developing States to participate in the global negotiation processes on biological diversity. In that regard, the Commission notes the significance of the Trust Fund under the Convention on Biological Diversity in supporting the participation of developing countries, including small island developing States.

G. National institutions and administrative capacity

33. The Commission notes that the process of building institutional and administrative capacity for the effective achievement of sustainable development is a complex process, and that for small island developing States, efforts have been hampered by a severe lack of financial and technical resources and skills. The Commission urges the international community to assist small island developing States in strengthening their national institutional frameworks, including - where they do not exist - the establishment, with adequate staff and resources, of national coordinating mechanisms for the coordination of sustainable development policies and action plans.

34. The Commission encourages small island developing States who have not done so to enact the necessary legislative and administrative frameworks that will provide the basis of their national strategies and activities for sustainable development, including enhanced inter-agency cooperation and effective integration of environmental considerations in economic decision-making, and calls on the international community to assist their efforts in building national capacity through effective institutional and administrative reforms.

35. The Commission recognizes that small island developing States suffer from a lack of adequately skilled human resources. It also notes the importance of a highly skilled and effectively trained human resource base in the effective implementation and enforcement of sustainable development policies and measures. The Commission therefore calls on the international community and the United Nations system to continue to provide concrete assistance to small island developing States by providing appropriate training opportunities for both men and women and capacity-building programmes at all levels, such as the UNDP Capacity 21 programme, to enable effective national implementation of sustainable development strategies, especially in the context of the Programme of Action.

36. The Commission encourages regional and subregional cooperation in this area, in particular in the sharing of information and expertise on national institutional and administrative capacity-building for the benefit of small island developing States. The Commission calls on the international community to continue their support for the activities of the regional organizations and institutions, including through the provision of adequate financial resources.

37. The Commission expresses concern at current trends in the levels of external assistance for small island developing States in national institutions and administrative capacity, and appeals to the international donor community to provide assistance to small island developing States at levels necessary to support the implementation of the Programme of Action.

H. Regional institutions and technical cooperation

38. The Commission recognizes the necessity for regional organizations and institutions to play a strong and effective role in the implementation of the Programme of Action in small island developing States regions. Small island developing States are encouraged to increase their cooperation and support for regional organizations and institutions. The Commission notes that effective programme delivery will be enhanced through the continued clear identification of national priorities. The Commission notes that the work of existing regional organizations and institutions may need to be strengthened or supplemented where gaps are identified.

39. The Commission encourages existing regional organizations and institutions to continue their efforts to enhance their own effectiveness and delivery of services, including through focused and sustainable outcomes, increased regional and subregional cooperation and joint sharing of activities, and calls on the international community to support those efforts. The Commission calls on the regional organizations and institutions to enact appropriate screening measures

before programme delivery to ensure that their work programmes and activities realistically target the needs and priorities of small island developing States The Commission also invites regional organizations to monitor programme effectiveness.

40. The Commission views with concern the absence of permanent regional coordinating mechanisms in some regions of small island developing States, and invites States concerned to identify the most appropriate and effective means for addressing that situation.

I. Science and technology

41. The Commission recognizes the lack of skilled and qualified scientific and technical personnel in small island developing States due to small populations and lack of adequate educational and training facilities, and encourages small island developing States to accord high priority to science and technical education opportunities and programmes at all levels of development, including the strengthening of support for national and regional educational institutions It would be desirable for small island developing States to collaborate at the regional and subregional levels to share resources and information, including traditional and indigenous knowledge, in the development of sound networks amor scientific personnel. Small island developing States are also encouraged to promote a comprehensive approach and to support the strengthened linkages between educational and research institutions and all other sectors, and to actively engage the private sector in support for science development.

42. The Commission urges the international community to enhance international cooperation in the development and promotion of relevant environmentally sound technologies applicable to small island developing States, and - where appropriate - to make that a component of regional and international projects. The international community is encouraged to take necessary steps to facilitate the transfer of appropriate technologies to small island developing States, wherever appropriate, and to actively assist small island developing States in establishing regional centres for capacity-building and training. Noting the measures undertaken by the United Nations agencies in assisting small island developing States with the development of scientific resources, the international community and regional organizations and institutions are urged t take necessary measures for supporting small island developing States to implement active and effective science educational programmes.

43. The regional organizations and institutions are encouraged to better promote appropriate science and technology training programmes at the community level in small island developing States, and to share information, including th establishment and maintenance of information and databases on new and innovativ technologies appropriate to small island developing States. Furthermore, regional organizations and institutions are encouraged to develop and deploy information systems using appropriate technologies, such as remotely sensed data, GIS and the Internet/Intranet, as the delivery mechanism.

J. Human resource development

44. The very limited human resources and other constraints facing small island developing States and the difficulties that those constraints exert on their sustainable development objectives are recognized. The Commission acknowledges the efforts by small island developing States and the progress made, and encourages them to continue to accord high priority to the comprehensive development of a strong and effective human resource base in all fields and across all sectors, giving particular attention to building health standards and care, development of education with specific environmental components and awareness-raising, the empowerment of women, and the provision of adequate training opportunities for all sectors. The establishment of incentive measures would help to retain key personnel in the public sector. Human resource development is an essential component in building the institutional capacity of small island developing States for delivering sustainable development.

45. The Commission calls on regional organizations and institutions to enhance their support for small island developing States in the area of human resources development by specifically targeting the human resource needs of small island developing States in regional development programmes, including through the provision of practical, effective and specific training opportunities. The regional organizations and institutions are urged to assist small island developing States in systematically identifying their needs and priorities and to give adequate effect to those needs in project planning for development. Greater regional and subregional cooperation is encouraged for the joint sharing of resources, technologies and expertise, as well as at bilateral and multilateral levels.

46. The Commission notes the work undertaken by the United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations and donors to address human resource needs of small island developing States in their funds and programmes, and invites them to continue to give priority to human resource development.

47. The Commission expresses concern at current trends in the levels of external assistance for small island developing States in human resource development, and appeals to the international donor community to provide assistance to small island developing States at levels necessary to support implementation of the Programme of Action.

48. The Commission recognizes the importance of the Small Island Developing States Technical Assistance Programme and the Small Island Developing States Information Network in the overall implementation of the Programme of Action, and noting the ongoing efforts of the United Nations Development Programme to operationalize the two programmes, encourages the continuation of those efforts, in cooperation with small island developing States Governments. The Commission further notes that the unavailability or insufficiency of financial resources is a main obstacle to the full and early operationalization of those programmes, especially of the Information Network, and invites the relevant organizations and the international community to provide support for their proper development.

K. Vulnerability index

49. The Commission recalls that a vulnerability index that takes account of the constraints arising from small size and environmental fragility, as well as the incidence of natural disasters on a national scale, and the consequent relationship of those constraints to economic vulnerability, would assist in defining the vulnerability of small island developirg States and in identifying the challenges to their sustainable development. The Commission notes the progress made on the index to date.

50. The Commission takes note of the report of the ad hoc expert group meeting on vulnerability indices for small island developing States,[7] and of its conclusion that as a group, small island developing States are more vulnerable than other groups of developing countries.

51. The Commission recalls General Assembly resolutions 52/202 and 52/210, as well as resolution 51/183, in which the Assembly requested the Committee for Development Planning,[8] at its thirty-second session, to formulate its views and recommendations on the report to be prepared by the Secretary-General on the vulnerability index for small island developing States, and to submit those views to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, through the Economic and Social Council, and to make the information available to the Commission. The Commission looks forward to the report of the Committee.

52. The Commission calls on the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the regional commissions, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other relevant bodies of the United Nations system, as well as other relevant actors, to accord priority to the continuation of the quantitative and analytical work on the vulnerability of small island developing States, in keeping with the provisions of the Programme of Action and General Assembly resolutions 52/202 and 52/210.

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[7] A/53/65-E/1998/5, annex.

[8] Without prejudice to the reform efforts under resolution 50/227.

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OTHER MATTERS

Draft text submitted by the Vice-Chairman,
Mr. Rogatien Biaou (Benin)

Matters related to the inter-sessional work of the Commission

1. The Commission on Sustainable Development decides, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/63 entitled "Programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development for the period 1998-2002 and future methods of work of the Commission", that in order to assist the Commission in its deliberations at its seventh session, the 1999 sessions of its inter-sessional ad hoc working groups will be devoted to the issues of:

(a) Oceans and seas; and comprehensive review of the Programme of Action for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States;[1]

(b) Consumption and production patterns, including recommendations for sustainable consumption for inclusion in the United Nations guidelines for consumer protection,[2] as requested by the Council in its resolution 1997/53 entitled "Consumer protection"; and tourism.

2. The Commission, in accordance with paragraph 133 of the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session held from 23 to 28 June 1997,[3] also decides that the Bureau of its seventh session shall conduct transparent and open-ended consultations in a timely manner to ensure greater involvement of member States on matters related to preparations for the seventh session of the Commission and the sessions of its inter-sessional ad hoc working groups, including on ways to improve the organization of work during the high-level segment of the Commission.

3. The Commission urges that, in order to enable the Bureau to carry out its functions effectively, consideration should be given to providing appropriate financial support, through exrabudgetary contributions, to members of the Bureau, particularly from the developing countries, to enable them to participate in the meetings of the bureau, in inter-sessional meetings of the Commission and in the sessions of the Commission itself.

Notes

[1] Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] General Assembly resolution 39/248, annex.

[3] General Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex.

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Provisional agenda for the seventh session of the Commission

Provisional agenda for the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Sectoral theme: oceans and seas.
4. Cross-sectoral theme: consumption and production patterns, including recommendations for sustainable consumption for inclusion in the United Nations guidelines for consumer protection as requested by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1997/53.
5. Economic sector/major group: tourism.
6. Comprehensive review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.
7. Initiation of preparations for the ninth session of the Commission, including discussion of issues related to the sectoral theme: energy.
8. High-level meeting.
9. Other matters.
10. Provisional agenda for the eighth session of the Commission.
11. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its seventh session.

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OTHER MATTERS

Draft text submitted by the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Miloslav Hettes (Slovakia)

Information provided by governments and the exchange of national experiences

1. The Commission on Sustainable Development

Recognizes the efforts made by all countries that have provided voluntary national communications or reports on the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national level and that have been made available by the Secretariat through the website;

Notes that voluntary national reporting has increased and that up to now 106 countries have provided information to the Commission;

Expresses its appreciation for the efforts made by the Secretariat in compiling and updating the information so provided. In this respect, the Commission emphasizes the importance of processing the contents of the national reports in order to take full advantage of the information therein;

Takes note of the concern expressed in the document E/CN.17/1998/8 regarding the timeliness with which these reports are requested and submitted;

Takes note of and welcomes the presentations of national experiences on sustainable water management given during the sixth session of the Commission and its ad hoc intersessional working group by representatives of China, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation, Venezuela and Zimbabwe;

Recalls the recommendation made on the exchange of national experiences at the regional level as contained in paragraphs 133 (b) and (c) of the Programme

for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (General Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex), and expresses its appreciation for the work carried out by the Secretariat in this field.

2. The Commission

Encourages Governments to continue providing voluntary national communications or reports on the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national level with broad involvement of all sectors of society and invites those governments which have not yet done so to submit their national reports;

Also encourages Governments to continue making voluntary national presentations in the framework of the sessions of the Commission;

Requests the Secretariat to process and compile, on a sectoral basis, the information provided by Governments and requests the Task Managers of the sectoral areas to make more comprehensive use of this information in the preparations of the reports to the Commission at its future sessions, in accordance with the issues contained in the multi-year programme of work of the commission, 1998-2002 (see Assembly resolution S-19/2, appendix);

Decides further that a similar sectoral review will be made on "freshwater" for the comprehensive review to be carried out by the General Assembly in the year 2002;

Further requests the Task Managers of the sectoral areas to provide relevant information on the global progress made in the implementation of Agenda 21 as part of the preparations for the comprehensive review to be carried out in the year 2002 by the General Assembly;

Takes note of the proposal under consideration within the Economic Commission for Europe to undertake the exchange of national experiences of the countries within their regions and invites the Commission to share the results of any such exercise with the Commission on Sustainable Development;

Takes note of the important ongoing work aimed at streamlining requests for national information and reporting, of the results of the "pilot phase" relating to indicators of sustainable development, and of the importance of identifying data gaps based on the information already provided by Governments.